1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

512 [264] neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradually become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

796 529 The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible. [556] Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy season attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Artibonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1749 does not even exist in local tradition.[14] Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recreation even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by this fact. Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

[484] [501] [798] [554]

796 [788] When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant.

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[8]

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought.

In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the markets are best attended during harvest months, when by official count as many as

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558 793 685 given him by a third party for whom he had done what was euphemistically called "a piece of work." The evidence clearly showed that the animal, which he had killed to feed a *combite*, had been stolen, and since this *gangan* could not establish his defense that he was an innocent receiver of stolen goods, he was convicted and sentenced to three months in prison, and to pay the owner of the pig the exorbitant sum — sixty-five gourdes — asked as damages. Sympathy was very generally with the *gangan*, but the opinion most often heard expressed was that his power had obviously been lessened by his misuse of the *connaissance* the gods had given him, or they would not have permitted even his arrest, much less his conviction. To reinforce the point, specific reference was repeatedly made to the *hungan* most popular in the valley at the time, about whom it was said that, for example, were he accused before a court, the officers might even enter his house in search of him while he was present, but they would still be unable to see that he was before them.

793 435 554 Other attitudes held toward workers of magic developed in connection with this case. The popular *hungan* was often called on, it was said, because his work was well done and his fees were not too high; it was pointed out that there were renowned *vodun* priests who charged five hundred gourdes for a *service* which this man directed effectively for but little over one hundred; moreover, such men often failed to remove the evil deities which were troubling the family that employed them, but would instead add more, so that their clients would soon have need of them again. Practices such as these, especially that of overcharging, are frowned upon by the *loa*, and if persisted in they "spoil" the power of the priest. This was one of the reasons why, in the opinion of many individuals, the *gangan* in question had been convicted. "He was once a remarkable *gangan*, but he has spoiled his *loa* by using them for evil, and by asking too much money for what he was employed

793 435 776 784

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769 17 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 177 178 [554] The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recognized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African. Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 [593] [605] [583] Within the family, the deference toward older members and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are African both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the [584]

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especially by the drummers. Experience among other Caribbean Negro cultures and in Africa itself has failed to reveal greater skill in calling forth intricate rhythms from batteries of drums than can be found at any Haitian religious gathering. The enthusiasm with which a man takes his place at a drum, the manner in which he loses himself in his drumming, the skill with which he maintains the time of his complex beats in common with two other drummers and those who manipulate the rattles and the iron, bespeak long training and a passionate devotion to the art. The same is true of dancing. The best drummer, the finest dancer, hold positions of esteem in the community, and on occasion their fame will go beyond the valley, an occurrence as unusual as it is valued. The excellence of the drumming and dancing and the concomitant artistry in song can be understood when one considers the age at which training is begun in these arts. At Mirebalais an infant of no more than two years has been seen to dance creditably, while a young boy of six gave a demonstration of drumming that spoke eloquently of his promise as a drummer of talent. Before every *vodun* dance the boys take over the drums while the younger girls dance to their rhythms. They are watched with a critical eye by their elders, who from time to time correct them or praise those who do well.

The accompanying musical forms are almost entirely African in their rhythmic structure, but European influence is traceable in their melodic line, which varies from unchanged European folk-melodies to purely African songs. In the use of the falsetto, however, in the statement of a theme by a leader and its repetition by a chorus, and in the countless modulations introduced into the song, the singing is entirely African, as are the postures struck by those singing.

The importance of the dance is apparent from the large range of dances. Of *vodun* dances there are the *avalou*, or *yanvalou*, a word meaning supplication in the speech of Whydah; the specialized steps for the various Rada and Pétro gods; for

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793 [969] [783] approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise, must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take place during this period are prescribed by the elder priest who has assumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general service, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, possibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge [789] of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult temple. [782] Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are invoked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa [794] and the dead who must indicate their approval. The elder houngan polls the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and fol- [533] low him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drummers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi. The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

793 554 627 [791] The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have profound knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know. Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a number of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any [533] essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated himself for the rest of the evening.

346 It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

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ing Boyer's administration, 1818–1843, Catholicism was the state religion but the president was its chief. Leyburn notes:

> Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in the holy orders but had been unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. . . . They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee.[8]

It was not until 1860, after the death of the "Emperor" Soulouque, that Haiti signed a concordat with the Roman Church.

The role of the prêt' savane became defined after the slave revolts of 1791. His cue was taken from the activities of freebooting Europeans who apparently needed neither religious orders nor profound Catholic knowledge for their pseudo-clerical work. And the long period without a responsible priesthood gave the "bush priest" an opportunity to flourish.

The prêt' savane of today has a respected place in the community, though his prestige is not so great as that of the houngan on the one hand or the Catholic priest on the other. His place is guaranteed by his ability to bring to the Vodoun service elements of a competing system which the houngan, operating within the framework of African tradition, does not provide. Acceptance of these Catholic elements as a peripheral part of Vodoun is characteristic of much West African religious thinking, in which new deities and rituals may be added to the old when circumstances require.

The prêt' savane opens many Vodoun services with an *action de grâce*, reads prayers when a death has occurred, participates in marriage rites, and "baptizes" the hounfor, the cult drums, and the sacred rattles—not to mention the loa themselves! But it is the houngan's powers that are paramount. The "bush priest" is in a sense performing a service for the Vodoun priest, whose rituals and administrations are regarded as the effective and vital ones. The prêt' savane is a cultural afterthought.

In certain remote and isolated mountain places the prêt' savane is virtually unknown. But there is no sense of deprivation, for the cult priests —even the poorest and the most rustic—have their own way of dealing with the saints, God, and the forces of nature. An aged houngan of the Morne la Selle region explained it this way:

"In everything that is done, God's permission is asked first. Most houngans in the mountains do not know how to read, and they don't know how to pray. But they know many things. They know where the sun rises,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

796 793 [594] [702] Then a well-dressed young man entered, and the drummers swiftly changed to the salute reserved for guests of distinction. The hounsi sang, "Président passe là, l'ap monté au gouvernment!" and waved paper flags and kerchiefs. The young man was a distant relative of Stephan's; he also was a houngan.

After a while Stephan brought from his hounfor a second asson, or ritual rattle, and another small hand bell, both of which he handed to the young man. He was extending the courtesy of his hounfor, sharing his [916] instruments of authority and religious power with his fellow houngan. Then followed an exhibition between the two houngans that was half duel and half ballet. They stood face to face, each of them holding the asson in one hand and the tiny bell in the other. Stephan was "testing" the young houngan for the edification of all present. Each tiny move made by Stephan was duplicated simultaneously by his guest, as though he were a mirrored reflection.

Every posture Stephan made was duplicated instantly by his guest. The assons and the bells were agitated constantly. The rattle in the young man's hand did precisely what Stephan's did. The two men looked into each other's eyes with intensity, as though this bound their movements together and unified them. When Stephan twisted to the left, the other houngan twisted to the right. Every contortion of the young man was an exact replica of Stephan's movements. The two assons rattled out the same rhythms and the same signals; so did the bells. The backdrop for this "test" was provided by the drummers. The faces of the two men broke into a sweat from the intense nervous effort. At last it came to an end. A woman came forward and wiped their faces with a colored kerchief. The "testing" ceremony was over. The visiting houngan had been proved.

796 793 787 [532] [794] [776] Stephan then made a ritual vèvè, or maize-flour ritual drawing on the ground. Afterward there was more singing and dancing by the hounsi. They sang several songs for Ezilie Fréda, the "pure" loa. And Alexis Stephan went into a trance. It was unexpected. The servitors had not prepared for it. In this emergency the visiting houngan took over. He seemed a little anxious. He was unfamiliar with the particular psychological factors at play in this particular hounfor. He was not certain of the character of Stephan's possession. But he took over grimly. The houngénicon, an older woman, stepped forward to help. While the young houngan wielded the asson and bell, the woman issued instructions. Stephan, his head hanging back, his eyes closed, was supported by two of the hounsi. Other servitors hurriedly brought out a white sheet and spread it on the ground. A chair and a table were set upon the sheet, and Stephan was placed in the chair, where he now sat with his head hanging limply on his chest.

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588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
796 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
[184] useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Ezilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Ezilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
[834] tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
796 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not
[753] be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
[777] fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
[787] the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Rami SV3

special future help and consideration from the loa (including the cessation of the illnesses or other misfortunes that have led to the marriage). A man (or woman) united with a loa in "matrimony" is "stronger" (*plus fort*) in his relationship to his environment and to other people. For this reason, the initiative for a mystic marriage does not always come from a loa. An ambitious person may seek such a marriage to strengthen his hand, to provide protection against other deities or human enemies, or to gain wealth or position. One observer, Odette Mentesson Rigaud, expresses the opinion that in such instances the marriage "is no longer a religious union of mystic love, but a magic pact."[10 A] The implicit element of "pact" is so evident in all mystic marriages, even when the initiative comes from the loa, that the distinction is not easily appreciated. However, persons suspected of "pushing" for a marriage with a loa are regarded as presumptuous or reckless, and often they are believed to have hidden motives. It is felt by many that the benefits of such a union can be only temporary and that catastrophe will ultimately follow.

A human party to marriage with a loa is deeply committed. He is subject to jealousy and anger on the part of his mystic mate. His behavior in the hounfor as in his daily life must be beyond the loa's reproach. He must avoid possession by other loa. And he must fulfill endless obligations. Sometimes the prospect of such binding ties is more than a man (or woman) is ready to face, and through the intercession of a strong houngan the loa may be induced to withdraw his demand for marriage. In that event, a special service is held, in the course of which the person buys his freedom with promises of special gifts and feasts for the deity.

One young man I knew was caught in a special dilemma—the houngan and the loa on one side, the Protestant Church on the other. The man, named Maurice, came from the mountains near Léogane. He was married but had no children. His wife's family, still living in Léogane, was Protestant. Maurice himself was a follower of Vodoun, and nominally a Catholic. When his wife was afflicted with a long series of headaches and earaches, Maurice consulted a houngan of Port-au-Prince. The houngan said that the loa Ayida Wèdo was demanding marriage with Maurice, and that the wife's illnesses were an indication of jealousy.

At the same time, the wife's parents came from Léogane and insisted that the girl's illnesses were brought about by God because Maurice was a follower of Vodoun. They demanded that he sever all his connections with Vodoun and become a Protestant.

After considerable anxiety, Maurice "purged" himself of Vodoun and

10 A [Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa", in Appendix A of Deren, Divine Horsemen, P. 264. Cf. P. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Conduit'm allé oh!
> Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
> Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]
>
> Take me, oh!
> Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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162 565 369 citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not contain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the atlases generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the élite.

565 554 A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This intermediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having once been up, are now on the way down.

433 162 If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 100,000.[7]

162 184 105 At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives, and easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities, generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

[162] [114] 7. The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 67, are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	10,000
Cap-Haïtien	20,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500: these are capitals of *arrondissements* or seats of courts. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than a thousand were added to the list above, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane,
433 cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large
652 amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times
534 which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color
643 line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave prefer-
641 ence in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed
563 at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom
643 of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are
642 numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

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175 643 choice of a leader. Not gifted with administrative ability, Hérard blundered first by imprisoning one of the most popular Negro leaders in the country, thereby turning much of the population of the South against him. Next, learning of conspiracies in the Spanish [669] end of the island, he tried to stamp out revolt by exile and jail sentences, only to precipitate there a real revolution for independence. In his fight against the Dominican separatists he was roundly defeated, and his prestige sank rapidly to the vanishing point. Within two months after his inauguration, he had only one third of the island left over which to attempt to rule. Within a year he was out of power altogether and with him the colored people.

175 669 The Revolution of 1844, although supported by certain old friends of Boyer, was chiefly a movement of Negroes—followers of the imprisoned black, Salomon; peasants from the South who had been promised much by the previous year's revolutionaries and had got nothing; and particularly the Negro army clique. The significant part of the new revolution was its announced purpose, to lessen the influence of the colored group in government, to have a black president, and to dispossess certain reputedly well-to-do citizens by [643] dividing their estates among the people. Quickly successful, the insurgents promoted to the presidency the illiterate octogenarian black general, Guerrier, who in Christophe's kingdom had been Duke of Marmalade[3] and Duke of Avancé.

175 643 662 For the first time in a quarter-century the Negro element was again in the saddle, where it was to remain for the next fifteen years. Everyone recognized Guerrier's personal courage and admired the common sense which made him prefer conciliation to unnecessary violence as a method of government, but the colored people were shocked at having to live under the rule of another black ex-slave. The idea evoked grim memories. Knowing Guerrier's addiction to drink, the colored faction managed to make him a tool for their own use, so that his brief administration, ending with his death in 1845, was generally known as a "government of understudies." Guerrier was followed in the presidency by another black, likewise an octo-
175 643 genarian: Louis Pierrot, the handsome brother-in-law of King Christophe. But Pierrot was even more ignorant than Guerrier and

[554] 3. This title generally evokes amusement among non-Haitians. Christophe had merely named his peers after districts whose names had been given by French planters in the eighteenth century. Another of his noblemen was a Count of Limonade.

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175 The Occupation had had other far-reaching consequences. It had
648 removed from the Constitution an article which had endured from
642 the very first—the prohibition against ownership of land by white
423 people. Americans argued that since Haiti's greatest potential source
563 of wealth was agricultural (sugar and coffee in particular), new methods were needed if rehabilitation were to occur. Only foreign whites had both the necessary wealth and the requisite agricultural knowledge: therefore, whites must be attracted into the country by an opportunity to establish plantations. Although the Senate of Haiti protested violently against this reversal of tradition, which struck at the people's long pride in their complete ownership of the land, the Americans yielded only on the point of requiring five years' residence of the white landlord in the country. The influx of foreign whites has not been large, but in the Plaine du Nord and Port-au-Prince the white "colonies" are considerably larger now than in 1914.

175 Up to the present moment the white element in Haiti has not
648 exerted any noticeable pressure on the government. Its mere pres-
563 ence, however, is bound to be a restraining influence on politicians for most of the whites are Americans, and the government at Washington may not always follow a good-neighbor policy. With the clannishness so usual in white colonists living among darker people, the Americans in Haiti have their private clubs and their closed social set. For the first time since 1804 the élite are socially not the highest-ranking persons in the country.

175 The physical presence of several hundred white Marines for nine-
648 teen years had also one unplanned but inevitable result: an increase in
563 the amount of white blood in the population. For many decades
144 numerous élite had rested comfortably beneath their light skins, knowing that only they, with their greater mobility in the world, had any real chance to sustain a white strain. The Occupation, however, brought white men in contact with black women; there was a steady average of 2,000 white Marines in the country for two decades. The light skin of resulting offspring suggested to many the possibility of a climb up the social ladder now that the most difficult rung had already been achieved. No figures are available on the number of children born in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 of white fathers, but it was a perceptible influx in the lower class.

• [554]

175 Haitian businessmen enjoyed a greater economic prosperity during
458 the Occupation than they had ever known before. It is commonly

Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion ROMAN CATHOLICISM in the daily 129

lives of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses nothing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church.

The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite members of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the matter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal

771 184 [554] [558] 793 829 563 196 191 193 191 196

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making Legba (or any of their other loa) unusually handsome or admirable; he is, on the contrary, honored none the less because he is a lame old man who wanders about clothed in rags. His homely aspect seems to be a part of his comfortable nature: the "Papa" with which his invocation is prefaced, though not unusual in addressing loa, seems generally to be spoken with overtones of real affection, with the same feeling of kindliness one has for a benevolent uncle in the neighborhood. In parts of Haiti Legba is associated with the Catholic Saint Anthony.[23] As with other loa, there are special attributes, sacrifices, places, and traditions pertaining to him which are characteristic only of limited localities.

Ezulie is the most generally acknowledged female loa. She is especially interesting because of her resemblances to the Virgin Mary. Although she is Dahomean in origin, she is conceived as pale, almost white, probably by the influence of countless lithographs of the Virgin circulated in Haiti as in any other Catholic country. Ezulie is very wealthy, possessing many different dresses and much jewelry. In these aspects she is unique among the loa. It is quite possible that there is a causal connection between the conception of lightness of color and that of wealth, for the only women who possess jewelry and large wardrobes in Haiti are the light-skinned élite; on the other hand, many pictures of the Virgin depict her in queenly robes and adorned with gems, so that the idea may have been derived principally from her. Ezulie is a trembling woman inhabiting the water. She seems to have no one specific function in connection with which she is worshiped, as with Legba, who guards thresholds; rather, she is approachable in a confidential way, as an understanding mistress might be. Her favorite color being white, all animals sacrificed to her are white, whether turkeys, chickens, or goats.

In somewhat the same manner as Christians conceive of their God in diverse manifestations—Christ as priest or king, God as father or judge—so the Haitians in a more direct, illogical, and naïve way, think of their loa in different manifestations. Maîtresse Ezulie, for example, seems to change her major characteristics altogether when she is Ezulie Gé-rouge (that is, the Red-eyed); then she is Pétro, not Rada; boisterous and rather hearty, not trembling.

The third loa, Damballa, is so prominent that some of the early

23. Price-Mars, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

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175 581 588 643 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 581 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

593 565 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.

[114] [581] [554] 6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."